




City of Phoenix
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

To: PDD Boards and Commission Members
PDD Hearing Officers

Date: April 17, 2020

From: Alan Stephenson 
Planning and Development Director

Subject: PDD PUBLIC MEETINGS & HEARINGS: LOCAL EMERGENCY MEASURES

In response to the Phoenix City Council's declaration of a Local Emergency on March 20, 2020 and to help ensure the health and safety of the public, applicants, Boards & Commission members, hearings officers and staff, starting on Monday, April 20, 2020 all Planning and Development Department (PDD) affiliated Boards & Commissions and hearing officers will host their meetings or hearings in a virtual format utilizing the WebEx Events platform. Information on how to attend and participate in the virtual meeting / hearing will be provided on the agenda for each meeting / hearing posted on the public meeting notices website at <https://www.phoenix.gov/cityclerk/publicmeetings>.

Applicants will be required to provide notice for the meetings / hearings as outlined in the Zoning Ordinance but will modify the letters and signs to direct interested parties to the posted agenda on phoenix.gov for information on the virtual meeting / hearing and to contact the assigned staff with questions.

Virtual Meeting & Hearing Function

Staff will reach out to their assigned hearing body (committee / commission) or officer to provide them with information on how the virtual meeting will be conducted. Instructions will be developed and provided for the hearing bodies and officers in preparation for the meeting / hearing. Staff will make every attempt to accommodate requests by hearing body members and officers for practice in utilizing the WebEx Events platform.

Staff will communicate with hearing bodies and officers that the virtual meeting / hearing will operate differently than an in-person meeting / hearing and will encourage questions be asked prior to the meeting. The staff report, staff presentation and applicant presentation/information will be provided to the hearing bodies and officers in advance of the meeting for review. There will be an expectation that the hearing body and officer will review all materials prior to the virtual meeting / hearing. Staff is also exploring the ability to provide additional information online for the meetings and hearings for public review.

Members of the public are encouraged to provide comments and questions before the meeting / hearing. Some hearing bodies and officers require information further in advance than others. Members of the public should reach out to the assigned staff on the posted agenda to inquire if deadlines may exist for public comment submittal. Public comments should be directed to the assigned PDD team for the meeting / hearing. Any comments received by staff will be distributed to the hearing body members or hearing officer and added to the case file.

The assigned planner will have the staff and the applicant's presentation available for review during the virtual meeting, if needed. A short summary of the request (amended presentation) will be provided by staff. Hearing body members and hearing officers will be required to sign in via a computer or mobile device to be able to participate in the meeting / hearing. Audio will be controlled by the assigned staff. Hearing body members will use the "raise hand" function in WebEx Events to ask questions. The assigned planner will partner with the hearing body chair or hearing officer to facilitate discussion.

Applicants and members of the public wishing to participate in the virtual meeting / hearing will be required to contact the assigned staff in advance. The staff will respond with a link to the virtual meeting / hearing. Applicants and members of the public should indicate to the staff if they wish to speak and will also be required to sign in via a computer or mobile device to participate.

In order to assist anyone wishing to participate as much as possible with the administrative and technological requirements associated with participating in a WebEx Event, we are asking that requests to participate be sent to assigned staff 48 hours in advance of the meeting/hearing. Staff will make every effort to accommodate requests beyond the 48 period. Due to the added demands of facilitating the virtual environment for the public, applicants and other staff members during this initial implementation phase, we cannot consider any request less than six business hours before the start of the meeting / hearing.

Applicants and members of the public will also use the "raise hand" function to ask questions or provide additional comments. The staff will coordinate with the hearing body chair or hearing officer on any requests to speak from the applicant or public logged in as a participant in the virtual meeting. Applicants and members of the public will also be provided with a call-in number. Call ins will be muted but will allow for callers to listen into the discussion if they are unable to connect on the internet.

Next Steps & Resources

Staff will be in touch soon to schedule time for training and determine if any hearing body members or hearing officers need assistance in participating in this new virtual format.

Staff will be conducting many of the virtual meetings / hearings from a location in City Hall and we may have some limited capacity to accommodate requests from hearing body members or hearing officers to participate in the virtual meeting or hearing on site while implementing current social distancing measures.

We have created a web page for information about the move to virtual meetings at <https://www.phoenix.gov/pdd/Covid19-Public-Meeting-Process>. The page will have links to resources and videos related to WebEx Events and additional information regarding changes in our processes and procedures.

Sunset

These measures will sunset when the City lifts the Local Emergency declaration. The Planning and Development Director may terminate, extend, or modify these requirements at any time.